

VZCZCXRO8502
OO RUEHAG
DE RUEHMD #0779/01 0901026
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 311026Z MAR 06
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9286
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 3884
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 0919
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY 1174
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 5945
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA PRIORITY 1828
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0159

C C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MADRID 000779

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR EUR A/S FRIED AND DAS VOLKER; EUR/WE; NSC FOR JUDY
AINSLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/30/2016

TAGS: PREL PGOV SP UN

SUBJECT: SPAIN: AMBASSADOR,S MEETING WITH FM MORATINOS

REF: STATE 40904

MADRID 00000779 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Classified by Ambassador Eduardo Aguirre
for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

Summary: (C) Spanish FM Moratinos told Ambassador Aguirre that he cancelled his April trip to Damascus as a sign of good faith with the US. He conveyed to the Ambassador President Zapatero's personal thanks to him and the USG for the Department,s statement on the ETA ceasefire. He said he was working to make sure that Spanish Defense Minister Bono turned off any plans to refurbish Libyan Chinooks and said he was seeking agreement to send Spanish Guardia Civil and police to Haiti, possibly with a contingent of Moroccan counterparts, following the Spanish withdrawal of its peacekeepers. Moratinos asked the Ambassador to consider whether it would be possible or useful for the two of them to stop in Washington and meet with Secretary Rice en route to or from the US-Spain Council meetings in Tampa in mid-June. The Ambassador also raised Latin America and NATO support for the AMIS mission in Darfur, and touched on Haiti, Afghanistan and the MFA,s invitation to discuss Western Sahara with senior NEA officials. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos told Ambassador Aguirre he had decided to cancel his planned April trip to Damascus as a sign of Spain,s desire to work with the US, but said that he believed it was a mistake to continue to isolate the Asad regime. Ambassador Aguirre reviewed in detail US concerns regarding Syria (reftel), emphasizing our multilateral approach, insistence on fulfillment of UN Security Council resolutions and our close cooperation with EU, which also has a unified policy toward Syria. The Ambassador also made clear his and the USG,s displeasure with press leaks about his discussions with Moratinos and the Foreign Ministry during the period of Moratinos, unannounced &technical stop" in Damascus earlier this month.

¶3. (C) Raising the recent ETA ceasefire announcement, Moratinos carried a personal message of thanks from President Zapatero to the Ambassador and the USG for the approach the Department spokesman had taken in response to questions about the US position on the ceasefire. Moratinos said the ceasefire offer is serious, even though there is a long road

ahead. The government believes that the signs are positive on ending ETA violence but remains cautious and its public statements will remain cautious. The Ambassador asked about whether Zapatero might hold early elections as part of the strategy of confirming his position in the ETA negotiations (a rumor rampant in the PP). Moratinos said he had heard from Zapatero personally that there would be no call for early elections and no reason for them. Zapatero is confident that he will win in the regularly scheduled national elections in spring of 2008.

¶ 14. (C) On possible Spanish defense sales to Libya, Moratinos said he understood our concerns and had spoken to Defense Minister Bono; Moratinos believes that there will be nothing further on the idea of refurbishing Libyan Chinook helicopters.

¶ 15. (C) Moratinos affirmed his desire to work closely with the US on Latin America. He said that Evo Morales gave Spanish Deputy FM Bernardino Leon in La Paz recently a message for the US: that Bolivian relations with the US were better than he expected, he was seeking to fulfill requirements on coca eradication, and sought US help in limiting damage to Bolivian soybean exports to Colombia and others affected by the Free Trade Agreement. Moratinos said Spain was working hard with the Andean Community to counter Venezuelan President Chavez, attempts to pull Bolivia away from that fold. Ambassador Aguirre noted that increased Spanish efforts to support Sumate in Venezuela would be welcome, and that ending further ideas to continue with the aircraft sale to Venezuela would also go a long way toward building US confidence in our cooperative efforts. Moratinos replied that the plane sale was dead; the Ambassador pointed to continued news reports that discussions continued on obtaining the technology from other countries following the US denial of the technology transfer.

MADRID 00000779 002.2 OF 002

¶ 16. (C) Noting Moratinos's own comments on the subject, the Ambassador asked about plans to send Spanish Guardia Civil and/or police to Haiti following the withdrawal of Spanish troops. Moratinos said that he was working to get some 50-60 Guardia Civil and Spanish National Police officers to Haiti, in addition to 40-50 Moroccan counterparts (not further identified), but that neither contingent was yet confirmed.

¶ 17. (C) The Ambassador broached rumors that Spain might augment its troop presence in Afghanistan. Moratinos said that, again, there was nothing definite yet, but he was seeking to convince DefMin Bono on the need to send some 100 more troops to assist the Spanish PRT in Western Afghanistan and to provide the PRT with additional support capabilities.

¶ 18. (C) The Ambassador raised NATO's efforts to support the AMIS operation in Darfur, in response to reports that the Spanish PermRep had posed difficulties as the NAC approved its tasking to the Military Committee on this issue. Moratinos was not briefed on the issue and said he would investigate right away. Ambassador Aguirre emphasized that he would prefer to see Spain as a catalyst for positive support on this and other NATO issues, not as a source of obstacles.

¶ 19. (C) In a related discussion, Ambassador Aguirre noted that Spain's new emphasis on development aid and other support to Africa might provide opportunities for US-Spain cooperation; Moratinos expressed interest in exploring ways the US and Spain could work together. He said in addition to development support, Spain was sending 150 peacekeepers to support peacekeeping in Congo.

¶ 10. (C) Ambassador Aguirre told Moratinos that he thought it unlikely that NEA A/S Welch would visit Madrid soon to discuss Western Sahara, as Madrid had requested, because the timing did not seem right. Expressing his disappointment,

Moratinos said that while the Moroccans likely would not develop their autonomy plan for another 6-9 months, it made sense for the US, Spain and others to strategize in advance. There would be no need for publicity on the discussions, Moratinos added.

¶11. (C) At the close of the meeting, Moratinos noted that he likely would run into Secretary Rice at the NAC Foreign Minister's meeting in Sofia, and wondered whether there was any news on his invitation for her to visit Madrid sometime in the future. The Ambassador replied that he had nothing new on the subject but added that actions such as Moratinos, stop on Damascus and other such distractions were not helpful in making the case. Moratinos asked whether every distraction would bring Spain, an ally, back to the starting point of two years ago. The Ambassador said that Spain and the US were good allies, but given the difficult times we have gone through over the past two years, which we and Spain were trying to overcome, irritantsQe and small become very important as the relationshiQs to mend iQ. Moratinos said frankly that a visit by the Secretary would help his credibility as he worked against steps taken by DefMin Bono such as the Venezuela arms sales.

¶12. (C) Moratinos asked whether he and the Ambassador should stop in Washington en route to or during their return from US-Spain Council meetings in Florida in mid-June and possibly meet with the Secretary. Ambassador Aguirre undertook to pass this suggestion back to Washington, saying he did not know where the Secretary would be at this time (the time frame in question is June 15-19). Moratinos said that he would like to visit the US more often to meet with key interlocutors in Congress, including the Hispanic Caucus, as well as think tanks and the US administration, but could not do so without having a meeting at some point there with Secretary Rice. (Note: Moratinos last met with Secretary

SIPDIS
Rice in Washington on May 3, 2005).
AGUIRRE